



WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS

State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development
Office of Economic Advisors

FOR WESTERN WISCONSIN COUNTIES

BUFFALO, CRAWFORD, JACKSON, JUNEAU, LA CROSSE, MONROE, TREMPLEAU, & VERNON

March 2004

Winter Frosts Regional Unemployment Rates

The month of February is in many ways the coldest and harshest month of the winter, often more winter like even than January. It is not unusual to have the year's coldest weather in this early month, or the worst storms. Strangely, it is also often the month when the first hints of the coming spring will appear as uncharacteristic warm spells amid the deep cold of a long winter. Residents of Wisconsin have long learned to see these false signs of spring for what they are – brief hints of a warmer season that is still well around the corner and out of sight for a while yet.

month. However, when compared to the same period of 12 months ago, there has been an increase of jobs and a decline in unemployment in seven of the eight Western Wisconsin counties.

Compared with twelve months ago there were 3,600 more jobs in the region. Industries leading the increase included health services, leisure & hospitality, and transportation.

The February seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the **La Crosse Metropolitan Area** was

Nationally in 2002, the increase in US manufacturing productivity, at 9.2 percent, was the largest among 14 economies compared, according to data released by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Except for Italy, productivity also increased in all the other economies, with gains of more than six percent in Sweden, Korea, Belgium and Taiwan. The US productivity growth in 2002 was substantially above its 3.5 percent average annual growth rate since 1979. Six of the other 11 economies for which historical comparisons are available also surpassed their 1979-2002 average annual rates of increase in 2002

Labor Force Estimates (Seasonally Adjusted)			
	La Crosse * MSA	Wisconsin (000s)	United States (000s)
Current month: February 2004			
Civilian Labor Force	76,800	3,120.2	146,471
Employment	73,700	2,956.9	138,301
Unemployment	3,100	163.2	8,170
Unemployment rate	4.0%	5.2%	5.6%
Change from one month ago			
Civilian Labor Force	400	9.1	(392)
Employment	400	2.6	(265)
Unemployment	100	6.4	(127)
Unemployment rate	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%
Change from one year ago			
Civilian Labor Force	3,900	57.7	573
Employment	4,100	71.4	983
Unemployment	-200	-13.9	(411)
Unemployment rate	-0.5%	-0.6%	-0.3%

Note: All estimates are preliminary and based on place of residence.
* La Crosse MSA Statistics include Houston County Minnesota

The employment characteristics typical of the colder months are well in place and reported in the February 2004 economic numbers for Western Wisconsin. It is expected that February employment will be at one of the lowest levels of the year. When we look at the unemployment rates of the Western Wisconsin workforce, it is not much of a surprise that there has been an increase from the previous

four percent, unchanged as compared to January's reading of four percent. This February's four percent showing is 0.5 percentage points lower than last February's reading of 4.5 percent. The February 2004 **La Crosse Metropolitan Area** seasonal unemployment rate ranked 119th lowest out of the nation's 331 metropolitan statistical areas.

Message from Deputy Secretary Lucía Nuñez

The date for the Governor's Workforce Development Conference is fast approaching. The 11th annual conference will be held in Milwaukee May 19-21, 2004 at the Four Points Sheraton-Milwaukee Airport Hotel.

This year's conference theme, **Grow Wisconsin: An Economic Imperative** is built around Governor Doyle's "Grow Wisconsin" plan. The conference agenda underscores his vision for Wisconsin's workforce and will provide tools, strategies and best practices for use in the workplace. Conference attendees will network, strategize and problem-solve on issues impacting economic and workforce development.

Those registering for the conference before April 17 receive a discount. More details about the conference can be found at: <http://www.gwdc.net/>

Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Area

February 2004	Buffalo	Crawford	Jackson	Juneau	Lacrosse	Monroe	Trempealeau	Vernon	Region	Non MSA*	Wisconsin
Civilian Labor Force**	7,920	10,190	11,900	10,980	64,980	22,410	15,430	14,960	158,780	93,800	3,100,440
Employed	7,340	9,380	11,100	9,710	61,780	21,120	14,090	13,940	148,450	86,680	2,900,760
Unemployed	580	820	800	1,270	3,210	1,290	1,340	1,020	10,320	7,120	199,680
Unemployment Rate	7.3%	8.0%	6.7%	11.6%	4.9%	5.7%	8.7%	6.8%	6.5%	7.6%	6.4%
Total Nonfarm (NFWS) ***	5,000	7,300	8,000	8,600	67,800	18,600	12,100	8,300	135,600	67,800	2,750,000
Total Private	4,200	6,100	5,000	6,300	58,300	14,200	9,900	6,100	110,200	51,800	2,330,300
Goods Producing	400	1,700	1,500	2,300	11,100	3,900	4,800	1,100	26,700	15,500	612,000
Service Producing	4,600	5,600	6,500	6,300	56,700	14,700	7,300	7,300	108,900	52,300	2,138,000
Constr., Mining & Nat.Rsrcs	150	190	600	220	2,200	420	160	210	4,100	1,900	112,400
Manufacturing	300	1,500	900	2,100	9,000	3,400	4,600	800	22,600	13,600	499,600
Trade	500	1,900	800	1,100	11,500	2,600	1,300	1,700	21,300	9,800	426,700
Transportation & Utilities	2,000	200	700	300	2,100	1,900	500	300	7,900	5,800	313,800
Financial Activities	150	180	230	240	3,300	570	470	350	5,500	2,200	161,500
Education and Health Services	500	1,000	700	1,200	13,300	1,600	1,100	1,500	20,900	7,600	375,400
Leisure & Hospitality	400	700	700	700	6,700	1,500	700	600	11,900	5,200	231,600
Info., Prof. & Bus. Svcs, Other Svcs	300	500	300	600	10,400	2,300	1,100	600	16,000	5,700	418,600
Total Government	850	1,150	2,930	2,310	9,450	4,380	2,140	2,240	25,400	16,000	419,700
Federal	100	80	50	260	540	2,110	120	120	3,380	2,840	29,200
State	20	190	410	680	2,520	230	30	30	4,110	1,590	101,700
Local	730	880	2,470	1,360	6,390	2,040	1,980	2,090	17,950	11,560	288,800
Change from one month ago	January 2004										
Civilian Labor Force**	-10	-80	-20	120	1,000	180	30	90	1,300	300	18,200
Employed	-70	-180	-100	40	800	90	-90	30	500	-300	2,600
Unemployed	60	100	80	80	200	80	120	60	800	600	15,700
Unemployment rate(%)	0.7	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.4	0.6	0.4
Total Nonfarm (NFWS) ***	10	-120	-50	70	1,000	150	-30	40	1,100	100	15,900
Percent change NFWS from last moni	0.3%	-1.6%	-0.6%	0.8%	1.5%	0.8%	-0.3%	0.5%	0.8%	0.1%	0.6%
Total Private	0	-110	-100	0	-100	100	-40	-10	-200	-200	-3,700
Goods Producing	-10	-20	0	0	-200	0	0	0	-200	-100	-1,600
Service Producing	30	-100	0	100	1,200	100	-30	40	1,300	100	17,500
Constr., Mining & Nat.Rsrcs	0	-10	-30	-10	-100	-20	0	0	-200	-100	-3,200
Manufacturing	-10	-10	0	0	-100	20	0	0	-100	0	1,600
Trade	0	-80	0	0	0	-20	-20	0	-200	-200	-4,800
Transportation & Utilities	20	0	10	0	0	40	10	0	100	100	-5,100
Financial Activities	0	0	-10	0	0	10	-10	0	0	0	1,700
Education and Health Services	0	0	-10	0	100	-10	-20	-10	100	0	3,900
Leisure & Hospitality	-10	-10	0	0	0	-10	-20	0	-100	-100	-3,300
Svcs	0	10	10	0	0	80	0	10	100	100	1,500
Total Government	10	-10	10	90	1,080	70	10	50	1,300	200	19,600
Federal	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	-100
State	0	0	0	90	810	0	0	0	900	100	6,900
Local	10	-20	10	0	270	50	10	50	400	100	12,800
Change from one year ago	February 2003										
Civilian Labor Force**	230	270	310	260	3,300	1,190	420	580	6,600	3,300	57,000
Employed	190	350	390	360	3,600	1,310	480	670	7,400	3,800	70,000
Unemployed	40	-80	-80	-110	-300	-120	-60	-90	-800	-500	-13,000
Unemployment rate(%)	0.3	-1.0	-0.9	-1.3	-0.8	-1.0	-0.6	-1.0	-0.8	-0.8	-0.6
Total Nonfarm (NFWS) ***	0	40	50	80	2,700	670	20	70	3,600	900	31,600
Percent change NFWS from last year	-0.1%	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%	4.1%	3.8%	0.1%	0.8%	2.7%	1.4%	1.2%
Total Private	60	50	0	0	1,600	700	0	100	2,500	900	36,800
Goods Producing	10	-30	0	-100	500	-100	-200	0	200	-300	-1,000
Service Producing	-10	70	0	200	2,200	800	200	100	3,400	1,200	32,600
Constr., Mining & Nat.Rsrcs	20	10	10	10	100	0	0	10	200	100	4,300
Manufacturing	-10	-40	0	-100	400	-80	-160	0	0	-400	-5,300
Trade	0	60	0	0	0	200	30	70	300	300	7,600
Transportation & Utilities	40	0	0	10	0	250	0	10	300	300	5,800
Financial Activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	0	100	100	6,600
Education and Health Services	-30	-20	0	0	700	-10	20	50	800	100	13,800
Leisure & Hospitality	30	40	0	0	300	10	10	-20	400	100	7,600
Svcs	0	-10	-100	0	200	320	10	-20	500	300	500
Total Government	-60	0	50	90	1,080	-20	40	-30	1,100	100	-5,200
Federal	-50	0	0	-10	0	30	0	0	0	0	-600
State	0	-10	-30	110	810	-10	0	0	900	100	-500
Local	-10	0	80	-10	270	-40	40	-30	300	0	-4,100

* Seven counties, excluding La Crosse County

** Includes participants residing in area.

*** Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates above are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. NFWS data benchmarked to 3/2003